

Indo-Aryan<sup>1</sup> suggests that it is liquid dregs which are intended. If this is so, then Buddhaghosa was merely guessing the meaning from the context, perhaps with the knowledge of a marriage ceremony where ashes were thrown.

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## A CITATION FROM THE \*BUDDHAVAMSA OF THE ABHAYAGIRI SCHOOL

It is well known that the Theravādins of Sri Lanka were divided into two main rival branches, the Mahāvihāravāsins (“Residents of the Great Monastery”) and the Abhayagirivāsins (“Residents of Abhayagiri [Monastery]”), and that after more than a thousand years of contention for legitimacy and patronage, the former won out, and the latter disappeared.<sup>1</sup> The Theravāda that we know today is the Mahāvihāra tradition, as settled in the main by the prolific commentator Buddhaghosa in the 5th century; the later Pāli literature of the sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*s) and manuals, although subject to a variety of influences, also belongs to the Mahāvihāravāsin lineage.

No undisputed Abhayagiri text has survived. The Pāli *Saddhammopāyana*<sup>2</sup> and the *Questions of Upāli*<sup>3</sup> and *Vimuttimaggā*,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the two schools, see André Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule* (Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient XXXVIII), Paris, 1955, chapters XXIX and XXX. A third branch, the Jetavanīyas or Sāgalikas (Bareau, ch. XXXI) seems to have played a less significant role. For the Abhayagiri, see *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 1, fasc. 1, [Colombo] 1961, pp. 21–25 (“Abhayagiri”), 25–28 (“Abhayagirivāsins”), and Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, [1956] 1966, pp. 83–85, 92–99, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into English by Ann Hazelwood, *JPTS* XII, pp. 65–168.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Bechert (ed.), *Upāliparipṛcchāsūtra, ein Text zur buddhistischen Ordensdisziplin*, aus dem Chinesischen übersetzt und den Pāli-Parallelen gegenübergestellt von Valentina Stache-Rosen, Göttingen, 1984, pp. 12–15, 28–31.

<sup>4</sup> Translated into English by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera, *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimaggā)*, [Colombo, 1961] Kandy, 1977; for a recent note see H. Bechert, “Vimuttimaggā and Amatākaraṇṇanā”, in N.H. Samtani and H.S. Prasad (edd.), *Amalā Prajñā: Aspects of Buddhist Studies (Professor P.V. Bapat Felicitation Volume)*, Delhi, 1989, pp. 11–14. Selected portions of the work are preserved in Tibetan translation: see P. Skilling, “The

<sup>1</sup> See CDIAL 12480.

both in Chinese translation, have been ascribed to the school, but there is some debate on the subject.<sup>1</sup> In my opinion there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the last named was not a Mahāvihāra text, and that it was either composed by or (if written in India) adopted and transmitted by monks of the Abhayagiri lineage. I will present this evidence in a separate article.<sup>2</sup>

The Abhayagiri monks were broad-minded in outlook; they maintained contacts with foreign Buddhist schools, and themselves established bases in India and in South-east Asia. An inscription from Ratu Baka in central Java, dated 792 A.C., refers to the Abhayagiri-vihāra of the Sinhalese. The presence in North India of the Abhayagiri, or of an affiliated Sthavira tradition with similar views, is shown by the fact that a chapter of the *Vimuttimaggā* was translated into Tibetan around 800 A.C., and that lengthy sections were cited by Daśabalaśrīmitra, a North Indian scholar, probably in the 12th century, in a work preserved only in Tibetan translation.<sup>3</sup> A similar tradition is

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Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra”, in *Buddhist Studies Review*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 1987, pp. 7–8 and 16.

<sup>1</sup> See K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (Jan Gonda [ed.], *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. VII, fasc. 2), Wiesbaden, 1983, p. 29 and accompanying note, and pp. 159–60. The most recent contribution to the debate is K.R. Norman’s “The Literary Works of the Abhayagirivihārins”, in V.N. Jha (ed.), *Kalyāṇamitta: Professor Hajime Nakamura Felicitation Volume*, Delhi, 1991, pp. 41–50, which gives an extensive bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> “*Vimuttimaggā* and Abhayagiri: The Form-aggregate according to the *Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*” (forthcoming), in which I will also discuss the date of the Chinese translation and the name of the translator, about which there has been considerable confusion.

<sup>3</sup> See Skilling (*op. cit.*, p. 16) for references. Some of the shorter passages cited by Daśabalaśrīmitra “from the *Āgama* of the Ārya Sthaviranikāya”, which are not yet traced in Pāli (Skilling pp. 7–8), may possibly be drawn from non-Mahāvihāra — that is North Indian Sthavira or Abhayagiri — sources. An Abhayagiri is referred to in the concluding Khmer portion of a Vajrayānist Sanskrit inscription, dated 1066 A.C., from the vicinity of Nakhon Ratchasima

possibly attested in South-east Asia at an earlier date, since \*Saṃghabhara, who translated the *Vimuttimaggā* into Chinese in the second decade of the 6th century, was from Funan, but whether he obtained the text there, from India, or in China itself is not clear.

We cannot say with absolute certainty that the scriptures of the Abhayagiri were transmitted in Pāli, although this is most probable, since there is evidence that the two branches shared the same *Piṭakas*, with a few relatively minor differences.<sup>1</sup> Had the Abhayagirivāsins adopted a Sanskrit *Tipiṭaka*, their rivals would surely have been quick to point this out; but no such accusation is found in available literature. The disputes between the school and the Mahāvihāra described in the Pāli chronicles, although frequently the result of a struggle for royal patronage, are usually in some way connected with *Vinaya*; although the Mahāvihāra accuses the Abhayagiri of harbouring “heresy” — that is, leaning towards the Mahāyāna — this seems more of a blanket charge than the real cause of contention. The kings of Sri Lanka made periodic attempts to reunite the two groups, which should have been impossible had they adhered to completely different *Vinayas*, and the points upon which the two branches differed, as described in the *ṭīkā*s, are significant only in a Theravādin context.

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in Central Siam: see Chirapat Prapandvidya, “The Sab Bāk Inscription: Evidence of an Early Vajrayāna Buddhist Presence in Thailand”, in *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 78, pt. 2 (1990), p. 12 (text line 32), p. 13 (tr.). The precise location of this Abhayagiri (note that the inscription names only an “Abhaya Mountain” (*giri*), where images of “Buddhalokeśvara” and others were installed and later renovated, and not a *vihāra*) is unknown, and it is not clear whether the toponym should be related to the Abhayagiri school of Sri Lanka.

<sup>1</sup> See Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, pp. 242–43, and Heinz Bechert, “Notes on the Formation of Buddhist Sects and the Origins of Mahāyāna”, in *German Scholars on India*, Vol. 1, Varanasi, 1971, p. 11.

Even the overseas branches of the Abhayagiri would likely have kept their sacred canon in Pāli (as do the Mahāvihāravāsins to this day), although they may have composed some treatises in Sanskrit. Examples of scriptures of several Buddhist schools have been preserved in a number of Prakrit dialects, both in manuscript and inscription, and even Sanskrit texts such as the *Ratnagotravibhāga* or the works of Candrakīrti and Śāntideva cite Prakrit passages in the original. Thus, although a trend towards Sanskritization was certainly evident in some schools, notably the Sarvāstivādins, Mūlasarvāstivādins, and later Dharmaguptakas, there was no compulsion to adopt Sanskrit.

A tantalizing brief citation of an Abhayagiri text is preserved in Tibetan translation in the *Tarkajvālā* of Bhavya.<sup>1</sup> The *Tarkajvālā* is Bhavya's commentary on his own *Madhyamakahrdaya-kārikās*; only the latter is extant in Sanskrit.<sup>2</sup> As is all too often the case, the exact dates of Bhavya — who is also known as Bhāvaviveka and Bhāviveka — are

<sup>1</sup> Derge (= D) 3856, *dbu ma, dza*, 177a7–b2; Peking (= Q) 5256 in D.T. Suzuki (ed.), *The Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition*, Vol. 96, Tokyo-Kyoto, 1957, *bstan 'gyur, mdo 'grel, dbu ma, dza*, 192b1–6. I am grateful to Dr. Josef Kolmaš of the Oriental Institute, Prague, for providing photo-copies of the relevant sections of the Derge.

<sup>2</sup> For this work, and the thought and work of Bhavya in general, see David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy In India* (Jan Gonda [ed.], *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. VII, fasc. 1), Wiesbaden, 1981, pp. 61–66; see also the same author's "Towards a Chronology of the Madhyamaka School", in L.A. Hercus *et al.* (edd.), *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*, [Canberra, 1982] Delhi, 1984, pp. 508, 512–13. Chapter 1 (verses, with Sanskrit, and commentary) has been translated by V.V. Gokhale, "Madhyamakahrdayakārikā Tarkajvālā, Chapter 1", in Chr. Lindtner (ed.), *Miscellanea Buddhica* (Indiske Studier V), Copenhagen, 1985, pp. 76–107. Part of Chapter 3 has been edited and translated by Shotaro Iida, *Reason and Emptiness: A Study in Logic and Mysticism*, Tokyo, 1980. Iida gives a detailed bibliography of studies of Bhavya's work.

not known. Ruegg suggests *ca.* 500–70, with a question mark.<sup>1</sup> Tāranātha states that he was born in South India, where he received *pravrajyā* and mastered the *Tripiṭaka*.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter 4 of the *Tarkajvālā*, *Śrāvakatattvāvatāra*, is a mine of precious information on the tenets and scriptures of the Śrāvaka schools.<sup>3</sup> The Abhayagiri citation occurs in the context of Bhavya's response to the contention that monks should not honour or worship a layman, that is, an unordained bodhisattva. He states that "in the texts of most of the eighteen schools (*nikāya*), it is clearly stated that a bodhisattva should be honoured" and goes on to cite examples from the scriptures of seventeen schools.<sup>4</sup> Of these, the Abhayagiri citation is seventh.

Bhavya describes the work from which he draws his citation as 'phags pa gnas brtan pa 'jigs med ri la gnas pa rnam kyī saṅs rgyas kyī rigs khri ṅis ston: "the Twelve-thousand Lineage of the Buddhas of the Ārya Sthavira Abhayagirivāsins". The title consists of two elements:

<sup>1</sup> Ruegg, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Antonius Schiefner, *Tāranāthae de Doctrinae Buddhicae in India Propagatione*, Saint Petersburg, 1868, p. 106.7, *slob dpon legs ldan ni lho phyogs ma lya rar rgyal rigs mchog tu skye ba brñed; yul de ṅid du rab tu byuṅ nas sde snod gsum la mkhas par byas*. Cf. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (ed.), *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, Calcutta, 1980, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṇan thos kyī de kho na ṅid la 'jug pa*, D 144a7 foll.; Q 157b2–218b8 = 123 folio sides. Of these, only about 17 folios have been translated and studied in the form of the independent treatise on the schools extracted from the *Tarkajvālā*, *bampo* 13 (D 148a4–155b6; Q 161a3–169a5 = Q 5640, Vol. 127, 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, u, 177a1–187b2): see André Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya, et Vinītadeva", *Ile partie, Journal Asiatique*, 1956, fasc. 2, pp. 167–91.

<sup>4</sup> D 175a7, Q 190a6, *sde pa bco brgyad phal chen gyi gzuṅ las kyan l byaṅ chub sems dpa' la phyag bya bar rab tu grags te*. The section runs from D 175a7–179b1, Q 190a6–195a2. In a forthcoming article entitled "Bhavya's Citations from the Scriptures of the 'Eighteen Schools'" I will study this section.

*saṅs rgyas kyi rigs* and *khri ṅis ston*. *Saṅs rgyas* = Buddha (plus *kyi*, to make the genitive); *rigs* translates a number of Sanskrit terms, such as *kula*, *gotra*, *jāti*, *varṇa*, *vaṃśa*, *nikāya*. On the basis of the (admittedly brief) context and Pāli usage, *\*Buddhavaṃsa* seems a likely equivalent.<sup>1</sup> The second element, *khri ṅis ston*, is a number, 12000 = *dvādasa-sahassa*. The title as a whole may be somewhat tentatively rendered into Pāli as *\*Dvādasa-sahassa-buddhavaṃsa*.

A question arises: does the figure 12000 refer to the number of Buddhas, or to the size of the text, measured in *ślokas*? In either case, the Pāli or Sanskrit title would have been the same. In the former case, one would rather expect the translation to read *saṅs rgyas khri ṅis ston gi rigs*, “the lineage or succession of 12000 Buddhas” (but the translators, faced with a brief citation from an unfamiliar text, might have failed to understand the title). While I have not found any references to a group of 12000 Buddhas in the Mahāvihāra texts, the Abhayagiri tradition may have been different. If the latter is the case, the translation may be compared with the Tibetan titles of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts: the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, for example, is rendered as *Śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa khri brgyad ston pa*.

I have not been able to trace the verses, or any similar verses, in the *Buddhavaṃsa* of the Mahāvihāravāsins. They thus seem to come from a uniquely Abhayagirivāsin text. The brevity does not offer us much information about the tenets of the school. We learn that it accepted ten perfections (*pāramī*); these are not named in the citation, but it is likely that the broader Sthavira tradition agreed on the subject, since the list of the non-Mahāvihārin *Vimuttimaggā* (pp. 188–89) agrees with that of the Mahāvihāravāsins. The citation adds to our meagre knowledge of Abhayagiri literature, and gives us an example of

<sup>1</sup> In the following discussion of the citation I will use Pāli equivalents of the Tibetan.

Theravādin devotional verse that is no later than the beginning of the 6th century. It also gives us a third, and the earliest, example of the availability of Sthavira texts in India: we now have the *\*Buddhavaṃsa* in the 6th century, the chapter of the *Vimuttimaggā* translated into Tibetan ca. 800,<sup>1</sup> and the *Vimuttimaggā* and other texts cited by Daśabalaśrimitra in the 12th or 13th century. While the last two examples show that the *Vimuttimaggā* was available in Northern India, we cannot be certain where Bhavya obtained his text. Tradition places much of his career in South India, but also has him visiting Madhyadeśa, and we do not know where he composed the *Tarkajvālā*. The availability of Abhayagiri texts in South India would hardly be surprising, since on a number of occasions monks of that school fled or were banished to the South.

Here follows an English translation; the Tibetan text of the Derge and Peking *Tanjurs* — the only editions available to me — is given in the appendix. I find the text rather difficult at some points, and hope that more able scholars will be able to improve upon my work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The chapter in question was translated by Vidyākaraśrī and dPal brtsegs. While the origin of the Indian manuscript, or indeed of any other texts translated in the period, is not stated, it is clear that Tibet's religious relations were with Kashmir and Magadha, from which most of the translators hailed. That the text would have been obtained from Lanka or South India is unlikely. Why the text was selected for translation is not known; I assume that it was chosen by the Indian translator(s) because it was highly regarded in their homeland, which again points to North India.

<sup>2</sup> For a note on the quality of the Tibetan translation of the *Tarkajvālā*, see V.V. Gokhale, pp. 76–77. I am grateful to Paul Harrison for reading the draft of this article, and making perspicacious suggestions.

1. “The Buddha’s son,<sup>1</sup> the bodhisatta, should be honoured by all the world (*loka*): [he is] limitless in wisdom (*paññā*), virtue (*sīla*), and the wisdom of liberation (*paññāvimutti*).
2. Donning the suit of great armour (*sannāha*) he attains inconceivable (*acinteyya*) power; fulfilling the ten perfections (*pāramī*), he realizes the *dharmas* of a Buddha.
3. All the world (*loka*) should pay homage to [the bodhisatta], shrine (*cetiya*) for all the world; there is no [member of the] community (*saṅgha*) who equals him in wisdom, virtue, or concentration (*paññā, sīla, samādhi*).
4. With the exception of the omniscient (*sabbāññu*) Buddha(s), [in] the world including the gods there is no one who should not honour [the bodhisatta] who is honoured by all the world.”

The section as a whole concludes: “Therefore, since it is proven that according to the scriptures of the eighteen schools bodhisattvas

<sup>1</sup> *Saṅs rgyas sras po* = *buddha-putta, buddhattaja*. Cf. *Buddhavaṃsa* v. 76, cited below, where *jina-putta* describes the *arhats*. *Jina-putta* (-*putra*) thus has two meanings: (1) a bodhisatt(v)a (cf. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II: Dictionary, [New Haven, 1953] Delhi, 1972, pp. 242–43, s.v. *jinaputra*); (2) a disciple of the Buddha (cf. PTSD 284a, PTC Vol. II, pp. 160–61, and *Buddhavaṃsa* citation below).

who have generated the initial aspiration [to Buddhahood], etc., are to be honoured, it is to be known that the Mahāyāna is included within (*antargata*) the eighteen schools”.<sup>1</sup>

The three-fold division of the Theravādins of Sri Lanka into Mahāvihāravāsins, Abhayagirivāsins, and Jetavanīyas was well-known in India, although Bhavya himself does not refer to it.<sup>2</sup> That he does not cite the scriptures of the other two schools may simply indicate that he did not have access to them, or that he deemed the Abhayagirivāsins to be representative of the Theras as a whole, and thus felt that a single citation sufficed. The *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Jātakanidāna* of the Mahāvihāravāsins may in fact be cited to support Bhavya’s case. In the *Sumedhakathā*, after the bodhisatta as Sumedha has stretched himself out in the mud so that Dīpaṅkara may walk over him without dirtying his feet, we read<sup>3</sup>:

*Dīpaṅkaradasabalo ca bodhisattam mahāsattam pasamsitvā atṭhahi pupphamutṭhihi pūjetvā padakkhiṇam katvā pakkāmi; te pi catusatasahassā khīṇāsavā bodhisattam pupphehi ca gandhehi ca pūjetvā padakkhiṇam katvā pakkamimsu; sadevamanussā pana tath’ eva pūjetvā vanditvā pakkamimsu.*

“Dīpaṅkara of the Ten Powers commended the Bodhisatta, the Great Being, honoured him with eight handfuls of flowers, circled him respectfully, and departed. The four hundred thousand [arhats] who had destroyed the cankers also honoured the Bodhisatta with flowers and

<sup>1</sup> D 179a7, Q 195a1, *de ltar na sde pa bco brgyad kyi gzuñ las dan po sems bskyed pa la sogs pa’i byañ chub sems dpa’ rnam la phyag bya bar grub pas theg pa chen po sde pa bco brgyad kyi khoṅs su gtogs pa yin par rig* (Q rigs) *par bya’o*.

<sup>2</sup> See the lists given by Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, pp. 24–26.

<sup>3</sup> *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS) 94,31–35; *Jātaka* I (PTS) 16,24–28, with a few minor differences.

perfumes, circled him respectfully, and departed. Gods and men as well honoured and worshipped him then and there, and departed.”

In this passage, the Buddha Dīpaṅkara himself honours the Bodhisatta, who is a layman, a brahman ascetic, as do the arhat monks. In this the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Jātakanidāna* of the Mahāvihāravāsins go farther than the *\*Buddhavaṃsa* of the Abhayagirivāsins, since v. 4 of Bhavya’s citation excludes the Buddha from the need to honour the bodhisatta. This is the text of the commentary, which dates in this form to the 5th century. A verse from the *Buddhavaṃsa* itself, which should go back some centuries earlier, gives a simpler account<sup>1</sup>:

*ye tatth’ āsum jinaputtā padakkhiṇaṃ akaṃsu maṃ  
devā manussā asurā ca abhivādetvāna pakkamuṃ*

Those Victor’s sons [the arhats] present there paid their respects to me;  
the gods, humans, and *asuras*,<sup>2</sup> having honoured me,  
departed.

Here only the arhat monks (*jinaputtā*) pay respect to the lay Bodhisatta; it is not stated that Dīpaṅkara does so. Thus the *Buddhavaṃsa*, its commentary, and the *Jātakanidāna* may be cited in support of Bhavya.

#### Appendix: Tibetan text

1. saṅs rgyas sras po byaṅ chub sems//  
'jig rten kun gyis phyag bgyi'o//

<sup>1</sup> v. 76 of the *Buddhavaṃsa*; v. 86 of the *Jātakanidāna* is similar.

<sup>2</sup> Humans, *nāgas*, and *gandhabbas* (*narā nāgā ca gandhabbā*) according to the *Jātakanidāna*.

śes rab dpag tu med pa daṅ//  
tshul khrims śes rab mnam grol dag<sup>1</sup>//

2. go cha chen po'i go bgos nas//  
bsam gyis mi khyab dbaṅ thob ciṅ//  
pha rol phyin bcu rdzogs gyur nas//  
saṅs rgyas chos mams mñon gyur pa//
3. 'jig rten kun gyi mchod rten la//  
'jig rten kun gyis<sup>2</sup> phyag bgyi'o//  
śes rab tshul khrims tiṅ 'dzin gyi<sup>3</sup>//  
de daṅ mñam pa'i dge 'dun med//
4. 'jig rten kun gyis<sup>4</sup> phyag bgyis pa//  
saṅs rgyas kun mkhyen ma gtogs<sup>5</sup> pa'i//  
lha daṅ bcas pa'i 'jig rten ni//  
'gas kyaṅ phyag mi bya ba min//

śes 'phags pa gnas brtan pa 'jigs med ri la gnas pa mams kyi  
saṅs rgyas kyi rigs khri ñis stoṅ las 'don to//

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<sup>1</sup> *Dag* D, *bdag* Q. The latter, “self, lord, master (*adhipati*, *ātman*, *pati*)”, seems unlikely in combination with *paññā*, *sīla*, and *paññāvimutti*; I have therefore followed D, *dag*, which simply indicates the plural.

<sup>2</sup> *Gyis* (instrumental) D; *gyi* (genitive) Q.

<sup>3</sup> *Gyi* (genitive) D; *gyis* (instrumental) Q.

<sup>4</sup> *Gyis* (instrumental) D; *gyi* (genitive) Q.

<sup>5</sup> *Gtogs* D; *rtogs* Q.